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UMaine Pursues Transformative \$110 Million Athletic Facilities Plan

17
FEB 2021

Honoring Harold Alfond's legacy of support for Maine education and athletics, University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy and Athletic Director Ken Ralph detail \$110 million plan

Orono, Maine — The University of Maine has unveiled its transformative \$110 million athletic facilities master plan. The initiative honors Harold Alfond's legacy of support for Maine education and athletics by providing modern facilities for all 17 varsity programs at Maine's only Division I athletic program, and improving the overall UMaine student experience.

In October, the Harold Alfond Foundation announced [an historic \\$500 million investment](#) in Maine and its people. The University of Maine System is to receive \$240 million over 10-12 years, including \$90 million in support for UMaine's \$110 million Athletics Facilities Master Plan.

"Harold Alfond believed in the University of Maine, its students, and the impact of athletics," said Greg Powell, Chair of the Harold Alfond Foundation. "He would be very supportive of the direction and current leadership at the university. We are proud to continue his legacy of giving to projects that benefit Maine's universities and its people."

"We are going to build outstanding athletic facilities to support our Black Bear athletes and students and youth from all over the state," said UMaine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy. "Wins for our athletic program and all the work we do to advance the initiatives supported by the Harold Alfond Foundation will include inclusion and community building. We are Maine's public universities and everyone will be welcome to engage in our programs, use our facilities, and contribute to our success."

Details, renderings, and videos honoring Harold Alfond's legacy and providing an overview of the \$110 million plan are now available at goblackbears.com. The website also includes opportunities for Black Bear Nation to contribute to the campaign to raise the initial \$20 million match by joining the [Alfond Fund](#) administered by the University of Maine Foundation.

"We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of the Harold Alfond Foundation," said Chancellor Dannel Malloy. "We have a great team headed by President Ferrini-Mundy and Athletic Director Ken Ralph, and a plan that will make UMaine the premier destination for college sports, youth, community, and educational events, and recreational athletics in Maine. Now we need Black Bear Nation to help raise the initial \$20 million match needed to get the plan done and to do even more."

Athletic Director Ken Ralph and Professor Judith Rosenbaum-Andre, co-lead of the UMS TRANSFORMS athletics planning initiative, will be working with campus committees and convening statewide discussions on utilizing athletic facilities at UMaine to support other UMS universities, high school athletics, persons with disabilities, athletes of all ages, and communities that may utilize these new facilities.

"For many years our athletes have been performing in outdated and even crumbling, cramped facilities. Thanks to the generosity of the Alfond Foundation and support from university leadership, we will be able to provide the quality of facilities necessary for our Black Bears to compete on a national level," said Ralph.

"We are also using this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to equity and to show our dedication to making Orono the go-to destination for sports in Maine for athletes of all ages," Ralph said. "Our students, our fans, and the local community have waited a long time for these improvements, and we are excited to get started."

Priority will be given to projects that advance gender equity like the [UMaine Soccer Stadium](#), a modern sport-specific facility for women's soccer.

UMaine Athletics, which partnered with JLG Architects to develop the 10-year facilities master plan, designed the plan as a way to best enhance the student-athlete and fan experience at university events. The plan was carefully constructed to develop facilities to also support a variety of campus programming such as, but not limited to, large academic conventions, music and arts events, and ROTC activities. Furthermore these facilities will add much needed space for the University's robust recreational sports programs including all club and intramural sports"

The vision of the athletics facilities master plan stretches far beyond the campus community as these state-of-the-art facilities will be tailored to host a variation of youth and high school events. The UMaine Athletics footprint will be equipped to host high school championships, youth club sports, and other regional events as UMaine strives to be the premier destination for youth activities in the state.

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UMaine Athletics expects to begin moving on the plan, with small upgrades in summer 2021 before beginning construction on the new fields in summer 2022.

An overview of the athletics facilities master plan features:

- Construction of the UMaine Multipurpose Center, the new home of UMaine men's and women's basketball on the Orono campus. This facility will feature new men's and women's basketball locker rooms, new team offices, lounges, and film rooms, new administrative offices, a new location for the Bear Necessities Fan Shop, and a new sports medicine center
- Brand new synthetic turf fields for UMaine women's soccer, UMaine field hockey, and UMaine softball
- A new turf surface at Mahaney Diamond and significant upgrades to the Mahaney Clubhouse
- Manufacturing the new Speed Dome, a 100,000-plus-square-foot enclosed facility complete with a 100-yard synthetic turf field and 300-meter track
- A second, new indoor dome facility, with 60 percent more indoor space than the current dome structure
- Renovations to Memorial Gymnasium, including improvements to Wallace Pool, new locker rooms for swimming and diving, field hockey, softball, and women's soccer, upgrades to staff offices, and extensive additions to the internal branding of the building
- Significant improvements to Alford Stadium, including a new turf surface on Morse Field, a more intimate experience with enclosing one end zone and tightening the bleachers closer to the playing field. Football also will benefit from new support services inside the multipurpose center, including a new locker room, new coaches' offices, a new video/meeting room, and a new strength and conditioning center equipped for use by all student-athletes
- Substantial upgrades to Alford Arena, including a new enlarged entryway and concourse area, the installation of high definition video and ribbon boards, a new sound system, and upgraded Wi-Fi and television production services.
- Expansion of the Shawn Walsh Hockey Center, with new locker rooms for both men's and women's ice hockey, a new strength and conditioning center, along with a new hockey development center, new film rooms, new offices, and new team lounges.

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